conflict withinin him to his mother, "The difficulty is that I'm two men; it's the strangest thing that ever was... one man wins the seat- but it's the other who sits in it."[i3]

In his love of portrait-painting, Nick is encouraged by his old friend, Gabriel Nash, to whom living is 'such an art/ and feeling is 'such a career'. Nash tells Nick that the superstructure of the individual's happiness is securely built on his own nature, on his disposition. Duty, or conduct, or honour lies in learning to play the individual's 'instrument' to perfection.[10] Nick has to decide between art and politics, between the self and the universe. His renunciation of politics would shatter the dreams of his family and of Julia, and Nick is sensitive enough to fee! for the disappointment of his mother and of Julia. But by renouncing art he is imperilling his 'immortal soul', and striking at the very roots of his artistic being, his whole self.

Nick is averse to the world of political din and scramble; he is disgusted by party labels, party slogans, and party treachery; he hates "humbuggery, hypocrisy and cant."[17] The temple of art holds out for him peace, happiness, wisdom, and a measure of success. As an artist, his ideal is the preservation of his artistic integrity. It is not as if the ideal of public service is an ignoble one; Nick realises that he is a misfit in politics, as his soul seeks fulfilment in art. Relations between Nick and Julia are strained when Julia becomes aware of Nick's artistic inclinations and artistic aspirations; and there is a rupture when Julia enters Nick's studio one day to find him painting the portrait of Miriam Booth in an atmosphere of intimate friendship.

. Jumping to the conclusion that Nick is infatuated with Miriam, Julia breaks off her engagement with him. This is followed by his resig-

. nation of his seat in the House of Commons, and both the happenings result in Nick forfeiting the fortune settled on him earlier by Carteret,

By giving up public life, Nick remains faithful to his artistic

. self. His decision to quit politics is regarded by his

people both as an outrage and a betrayal of themselves. It is outrageous, because it is for art that Nick has sacrificed his political career; furthermore, he has betrayed his family and his fiancee. By his sacrifice, he has lost Julia's money, as also Carteret's fortune, and has also deprived his sisters, Grace and Biddy, of their chances of prosperous marriages. What they, however, fail to appreciate is that Nick has not betrayed himself. Nick is a characteristic Jamesian hero in preserving his